



PHALACROCORAX CARBOÏDES, *Gould.*

Australian Cormorant.

Phalacrocorax Carboïdes, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 156 ; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part IV.—

List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., Part III. p. 184.

Black Shag, Colonists of Western Australia.

THIS is the largest species of Cormorant yet discovered in Australia, and even exceeds in size its prototype and near ally in Europe, the *Phalacrocorax Carbo*. Although enjoying a wide range over the southern part of the country, it is nowhere so abundant as in Van Diemen's Land. In this island it not only inhabits all the bays and inlets of the sea, but it also ascends the large rivers even to the lakes in the middle of the island, on several of which it breeds. In Western Australia it is tolerably abundant at King George's Sound ; it also ascends the Swan, and is sometimes observed far up the Murray. In South Australia and New South Wales it frequents similar localities, and I killed several while perched on the high gum-trees on various parts of the Hunter. It is, however, so shy and wary that it is very difficult to get within shot of it : when flying it frequently mounts upwards in circles until nearly out of sight.

Its habits, manners, and mode of life are so precisely similar to those of the Common Cormorant of Europe that a description of them would be superfluous. Its chief food as a matter of course consists of fish.

It lays two bluish white eggs, about two inches and a half long by one inch and three-quarters broad, on a nest composed of sea-weed and other marine vegetables placed on the ledge of a rock.

This fine bird weighs from six to seven pounds.

In summer the adult male has the throat and sides of the face buffy white ; crown of the head, lengthened plumes at the occiput, neck, all the under surface, rump and tail deep glossy blackish green ; feathers of the back, wings, and upper part of the flanks chocolate, broadly margined with deep glossy blackish green ; neck ornamented with numerous fine white feathers ; a patch of white feathers is also situated on the outer side of each thigh ; irides green ; bare skin round the eye and under the throat rich yellow ; feet jet-black ; culmen and tips of both mandibles horn-colour ; remainder of the bill fleshy white.

In winter the plumage is precisely similar, with this exception, that the white feathers on the neck have entirely disappeared, leaving that part of the same hue as the under surface.

The period of immaturity is characterized by the upper surface being paler than in the adult, and in the under surface being nearly white.

The Plate represents a male and a female about two-thirds of the natural size.